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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KBI LABORATORY RECEIVES DNA GRANTS

TOPEKA, Kan. – A U.S. Department of Justice program to support DNA crime analysis labs will provide the Kansas Bureau of Investigation with more than $500,000 in grants in fiscal year 2004, United States Attorney Eric Melgren said Wednesday.

A new grant of $398,183 from the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs will help the KBI's laboratory identify and test backlogged forensic DNA casework samples. A separate grant of $123,038 from the Office of Justice will assist the KBI's lab in making improvements to analysis capacity in the state offender DNA database.

The KBI laboratory provides free forensic examinations and expert testimony to all law enforcement agencies in Kansas. KBI laboratory facilities are located at Topeka, Great Bend and Kansas City, Kan. The laboratory has generated DNA profiles not only from typical items such as seminal fluid stains and bloodstains but also items such as cigarette butts, gloves, stocking caps, tobacco juice stains and hair.

DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. It is the fundamental building block for an individual's entire genetic makeup. It is found in nearly every cell in the body. DNA from blood is the same as the DNA in skin cells, semen and saliva. It is a powerful tool for criminal forensics investigators because everyone's DNA is different from every other person's, except for identical twins.

Melgren said the grants from the U.S. Department of Justice are helping crime laboratories in Kansas streamline, automate and reduce time, labor and costs to more effectively aid in investigations and prosecutions.

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